

Montana Department of
Public Health & Human Services

Section:

Best Beginnings – Quality Initiatives

CHILD CARE

Subject:

Mini Grants

Supersedes: Section 7-4a (07/01/03)

References: USCS (658g, 658e (c) (3) (B),
MCA 52-2-711
Child Care State Plan Section 5.5

**General
Information**

The DPHHS, Early Childhood Services Bureau is dedicated to supporting child care providers who demonstrate a strong link to professionalism in the field of early childhood and a commitment to providing high quality care in safe and healthy environments.

The Best Beginnings Mini Grants will be awarded from the Child Care and Development Fund, which allows states to award grants and contracts for the purposes of planning, developing, improving or expanding child care services. These mini grants are designed to cover cost of training (CPR, business training, etc.), equipment, supplies, and/or meeting regulatory requirements.

Who May Apply

- ☐ Currently established licensed or registered child care providers, or
- ☐ Groups or individuals interested in establishing a new licensed/registered child care facility. Child Care providers must be licensed or registered before grant funds are released. A copy of the child care license or registration certificate is required for verification.



Additionally,

- ☐ Providers must be registered with the Montana Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry and be placed at any level on the Career Path. Providers must include a copy of their certificate with application.
- ☐ Providers who have been disqualified with cause from the Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) may not apply for a Best Beginnings Mini Grant.
- ☐ Providers may only receive one mini grant per fiscal year.

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How to Apply

Each year the Department issues a two-page application with attachments, for the mini grant. Interested individuals may request an application from the local CCR&R agency, Quality Assurance Division Child Care Licensure Specialist or local CACFP Food Program Sponsor.

- Applications are returned to DPHHS on a quarterly basis. In order to be considered for the quarter a provider is applying applications must be postmarked by the following dates: first quarter – September 1; second quarter – December 1; third quarter – March 1; fourth quarter – June 1. Mail application with attachments to: DPHHS, Early Childhood Services Bureau, PO Box 202952, Helena, MT 59620-2952.
- These mini grants will be awarded quarterly and applicants will be notified by October 1 for first quarter, January 1 for second quarter, April 1 for third quarter, and July 1 for fourth quarter.

Program Description and Expectations

1. Applications must be complete.
2. The narrative must include an overview and explanation of any program enhancement and a description of the Knowledge Base areas the project is addressing.
3. Funds received under this grant must not be used to pay personnel expenses other than substitute care to enable a provider and/or staff to attend trainings.
4. Televisions are not an allowed expenditure.
5. In selecting providers to receive awards, a higher priority will be given to providers who are serving children under the State's Best Beginnings Scholarship Program and to providers who have not previously been funded under the DPHHS Provider Grants Program.
6. Providers who are awarded a Best Beginnings mini grant must agree to remain in business as a current licensed or registered provider for 12 months from date of award or return all grant funds.
7. Providers must not discriminate against children based on race, national origin, ethnic background, handicap, sex or religion.
8. Providers who do not receive a grant may reapply the next quarter. The second page of the application may be used as a communication

NOTE: Possible denial reasons: currently participating in the Best Beginnings Provider Grant program; low narrative score; not an active member of the Montana Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry; and/or incomplete application.

The maximum award amounts for mini grants are:

- ☐ \$1,500 for a Licensed Child Care Center;
- ☐ \$1,000 for a Group Child Care Home; and
- ☐ \$1,000 for a Family Child Care Home.

The award payment will be made on a one-time reimbursement basis only. Expenditures prior to the time the grant was awarded are not allowed.

A summary form will be sent with the provider's award notice. This summary form is to be completed and returned with receipts to the Early Childhood Services Bureau for reimbursement.

Best Beginnings Mini Grants will be payable up to one year from the date of the award.

1. Upon receipt of an application, ECSB Contract Specialist will check to verify the applicant is entered as a Person and as a Provider in the CCUBS system. Review the 'Provider' screen to ensure the address matches the W-9 that was submitted with the Mini Grant application. If the applicant is not entered as a Person in CCUBS, the ECSB will enter this information based on the Mini Grant application and W-9.

NOTE: When navigating in CCUBS on the Contract Application screen, use the TAB key on the computer keyboard to move from box to box.

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2. Applications are logged in on the CCUBS system when they are received in the ECSB office. This is done by entering information on the ‘Contract Application’ screen.

Applicant ID: The applicant’s PV #;

Fed Fiscal Year: The appropriate federal fiscal year;

Application Date: The date that information is being entered into CCUBS;

Application Received: The date the application was date stamped;

Contract Type: Mini Grant;

Application Status: Use the drop-down menu and select *Received*;

Effective Date: The start of the 12-month time period;

Denial Reason: Not used to enter in application requests;

End Date: The end of the 12-month time period;

Proposal Score: Not used to enter in application requests; and

Application Checklist:

Mark the Training/Project Plan.

3. Applications are prioritized and evaluated for participation in the program. Applications with the highest scores are awarded the mini grant. Approximately 25 mini grants are awarded each quarter. The score is then entered on the Contract Application screen in the CCUBS system and the status is changed to either approved or denied.
4. After the applications have been evaluated, the ECSB Program Specialist will update the ‘Contract Application’ screen in CCUBS. The ‘Application Status’ will be changed to either *Approved* or *Denied* and saved. If the status is *Denied*, the Program Specialist will also be required to enter a Denial Reason on the screen.
5. CCUBS will generate and automatically send a denial letter to the applicant.
6. Upon approval of the application, the ECSB Contract Specialist will set up the contract for all approved applicants following the steps

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below:

- a. On the ‘Contract Application’ screen in CCUBS, double click the box in the upper right hand corner labeled *Contract No.* This action will take the worker to the ‘Contract screen’.
 - b. On the Contractor tab, enter the PS# of the applicant in the white box under Person ID* and hit the TAB key.
 - c. On to the Budget tab, put the cursor in the ‘Budget Section’ box. Select the Mini Grant from Budget Section drop down menu. **Using the mouse** move the cursor into the ‘Budget Item’ box and enter the budget items (Budget Items may be typed in word-specifically or may be selected from a list using the F9 key):
 - ☐ *Ex: Training*, hit the TAB key and type amount.
 - ☐ *Complete for each budget item.*
 - ☐ *Advances*, hit the TAB key and type in 0.
 - ☐ Click on the SAVE icon.

At this point, CCUBS will SAVE the screen with a Contract Number.
 - d. On the ‘Contract Details’ tab select the Contract Status drop down menu: highlight 2. *Negotiation Complete*, and SAVE; highlight 3. *Final In-Route Signatures*, and SAVE; highlight 4. *Mailed*, and SAVE; lastly highlight 5. *Executed*, and SAVE.
7. CCUBS will generate an award letter that must be printed in the ECSB contract office. In CCUBS, Select *Navigate To, Notifications*, Enter the Contract Number and hit *Execute [F8]*. To view the notice, click on *View Notice*. Award letters are sent to the successful applicant along with a Best Beginnings Mini-Grant Award Summary.

